REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough consideration provided the present application. Claims 5-7, 9-16, 23-25 and 27-40 are now present in the application. Claims 5, 23, 35 and 38-40 are independent. Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has indicated that claims 6, 7, 9-22, 24, 25, 27-34, 36 and 37 would be allowable if rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants greatly appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter by the Examiner.

Telephone Interview With The Examiner

A telephone interview was conducted with the Examiner in charge of the above-identified application on January 25, 2006. Applicant greatly appreciates the courtesy shown by the Examiner during the interview.

In the interview with the Examiner, Applicants' representative presented argument with regard to the obviousness-type double patenting rejection. Specifically, it was argued that the 35 U.S.C. 121 prohibits the use of a parent patent as a reference against a divisional application in response to the restriction requirement made to the parent patent. The Examiner acknowledged that since the instant application is a divisional application of the parent application (now U.S. Patent No. 6,690,435) and claims the non-elected Group II as set forth in the Examiner's

Restriction Requirement dated July 31, 2002 for the parent application, the obviousness-type double patenting rejection based on the U.S. Patent No. 6,690,435 is improper.

Claim Rejections Under Obviousness-type Double Patenting

Claims 5, 23, 35 and 38-40 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 and 5 of U.S. Patent No. 6,690,435 (hereinafter "'435 Patent"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As mentioned, since the instant application is a divisional application of the parent application (now the '435 Patent) and claims the non-elected Group II of the parent application in response to the Examiner's Restriction Requirement dated July 31, 2002, the 35 U.S.C. 121 prohibits the obviousness-type double patenting rejection based on the '435 Patent (see also MPEP 804.01).

In the alternative, although the Examiner on page 2 of his Office Action alleged that claims 1 and 5 of the '435 Patent incorporate all limitations of the rejected claims of the instant application, Applicants respectfully disagree. In particular, claims 1 and 5 of the '435 Patent do not recite any "main supporter" as recited in 5, 23, 35 and 38-40. In addition, the features of the main support recited in 5, 23, 35 and 38-40 are not recited in any of the claims of the '435 Patent.

In view of the above remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting.

CONCLUSION

All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn.

It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the Office Action, and that as such, the Examiner is respectfully requested to send the application to Issue.

In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: February 22, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By Esther H. Chong

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